

Nadler's Statement on the Saudi Arabian Government's Funding of Hamas

Tuesday, 23 September 2003

Washington, DC -- Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) today made the following statement at a Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington community gathering and vigil outside of the Saudi Arabian embassy, opposing that government's funding of the terrorist group Hamas:

"I would like to thank the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington for asking me to speak today to demand that the Saudi Arabian government immediately stop financing the terrorist network Hamas. As reported in numerous publications, including the New York Times and Time Magazine, over half of Hamas' \$12 to \$14 million a year budget comes from Saudi Arabian donors. In fact, as stated by Israeli and American law enforcement and diplomatic officials, much of this money comes from government-controlled charities.

"Living up to its reputation as a sponsor of hate, the Saudi Arabian government has sponsored subsidies for families of suicide bombers. One 'charitable' event came in the form of a telethon, where Saudis donated nearly \$100 million to family members of Palestinian suicide bombers. Saudi officials told the United States government that the proceeds went to general humanitarian aid to Palestinians, yet their own records reveal that the money went to families of terrorists.

"The Saudis' so-called charitable giving doesn't stop there. A charity called the Saudi Committee for Assistance to the al-Quds Intifada, which is headed by the Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister, transferred \$55 million to the Palestinians. \$545,000 of that was given to 102 families of so-called 'martyrs,' including eight suicide bombers.

"Despite all of the evidence against them, Saudi leaders have the nerve to tell us that they are making efforts to stop terrorist funding. However, their inhumane track record is a testament to their hate-filled agenda.

"It should come as no surprise that the Saudi Arabian government is supplying terrorist organizations with the funding they need to carry out their murderous missions. Let me be clear about Saudi Arabia. It is the native land of Osama bin Laden, as well as of 15 of the 19 September 11 hijackers. It is a nation whose state-sponsored religion is Wahhabism, a militant form of Islam that emphasizes the hatred of Jews. It is an absolute monarchy; it rules over its people by force and fear; jobs and wealth are determined by loyalty to the royal family; women and religious minorities have no rights; anti-Semitism is not only rampant, but encouraged in the government-controlled press, and in schools and mosques.

"There is no doubt, after reading a summary written by a Hamas official of a fund-raising conference between Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah and Khaled Mashaal, one of Hamas' leaders, that Saudi Arabia provides funding to Hamas. This summary -- which is printed on Hamas letterhead -- says Mashaal and other Hamas representatives thanked their Saudi hosts for continuing "to send aid to the people through the civilian and popular channels, despite all the American pressures exerted on them," and that Crown Prince Abdullah praised the intifada and "expressed words of encouragement." This alarming evidence of Saudi Arabia's funding of Hamas is a reminder that the Saudi government does not deserve any sort of relationship with the United States.

"As would be expected, Saudi Arabian leaders deny all. But their claims that they are actually trying to stop terrorism are absurd. The Saudi government has supported terrorism, it has funded it, it has trained people for it, and they have been the source of a very large part of terrorism in the world.

"The Bush Administration should immediately insist that the Saudi Arabian government stop funding Hamas and other terrorist organizations. While the war on terrorism depends in part on identifying and apprehending terrorists, it cannot be won unless we destroy the financial networks on which terrorists depend.

"For too long, our country has turned a blind eye towards Saudi Arabia's infidelities. Two years ago, I watched in disbelief and horror as two planes struck the World Trade Center in the heart of my district. Enough is enough. It is time for Saudi Arabia to end the facade of being innocent bystanders and it is time that the United States use all diplomatic and economic means to pressure the Saudis to do so."

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